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MODERN POLITICS,

OR,

THE CAT LET OUT OF THE POCK.

A DIALOGUE.

It is a sport to a fool to do mischief, but a man of understanding hath wisdom. PROV. x. 23.

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. GAL. v. 15.

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MODERN POLITICS,

OR, THE CAT LET OUT OF THE POCK.

A DIALOGUE.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JOHN DUNT, a Presbyterian Blacksmith,	} <i>Friends of the People.</i>
GIBBY GRUNT, a Seceding Weaver.	

AND

MR TACIT NEUTER, a Schoolmaster, *a Friend
to the Country.*

SCENE, *the Street, which changes to an Ale
House.*

Dunt. **Y**OUR servant, neighbour Grunt, how
goes it?

Grunt. Thank ye, citizen; but what has
become of you, I don't remember when I saw
you at the Society?

D. Faith, neighbour, to tell you the truth,
I am beginning to be a little scrupulous a-
bout these Meetings.

C. Scrupulous, citizen! What do you
mean? Are not our Meetings for the purpose
of obtaining a Glorious Parliamentary Re-
form? Do you scruple that?

D. No, neighbour; But——

G. But what?

D. Why I'm afraid all's not right, all's not fair.

G. All's not fair ! Explain yourself : What do you mean ?

D. To be plain, I don't like the conduct of your Secretaries, your Presidents, Vice-Presidents, &c. They say they have *private* meetings of their own, where matters are canvassed which they dare not publicly avow, and to which what they call the *common hands* are not admitted.

G. Poh, Poh, neighbour, you are imposed upon, you have been conversing with some rich Anti-Reformer.

D. Not so, I assure you, Mr Grunt ; my information was from a very honest man, a Zealous Reformer, who suspects as I do, that some of our leaders have cloven feet, and that himself, and me, and such others, are only to be the tools with which they intend to work out their scheme of plunging the Country into blood and ruin, in the hopes of catching something for themselves in the Shipwreck of the Nation.

G. Why, Mr Dunt, you astonish me, I always thought you was staunch.

D. So I am *for my Country*. But I never meant to carry Reform so far as to dethrone the King, to degrade the nobility, and to introduce by blood, a speculative, turbulent, popular form of government, in the room of a long tried, well pois'd, limited Monarchy.

G. Perdition, Mr Dunt ! whom is it you accuse of these designs ?

D. I need not tell you whom it is I accuse, you know them all as well as I do.

G. You are a Calumniator, Sir,—You are an Aristocrate.

D. You are a Traitor and a Blackguard.

G. Traitor, Mr Dunt ! take care what you say ; I always thought you a civil sort of a man ; But you must take care what you say ; You must prove it ; I will make you prove it.

D. So I can when there is occasion, tho' I scorn to be an informer against my neighbour, as much as I abhor treacherous and bloody designs against the peace and prosperity of my native Country.

G. You are in a passion, Mr Dunt. If you will cool and consider the sad situation of this Country, loaded with an immense National Debt, you will confess that there is the highest necessity for a Reform.

D. The National Debt ! That is the cant word you always introduce. I wish some of you would look at your own debts, contracted through idleness and intemperance. I wish you and others would.

G. Stop, neighbour, you are too hot upon the matter. Why wont you hear reason ? Don't you consider that it is these cursed taxes that has made us all so poor ! Why, neighbour, we have so much to pay to clear the National Debt, that we——

D. Clear the National Debt ! that's of a piece with the nonsense and misrepresentations, with which you and such others have imposed upon the well-meaning and unwary. Why, Sir, I never paid a farthing of the National Debt in my life, nor have you either. I have saved something for a fore foot, and maintained my family decently, which is more than you can say.

G. Never paid a farthing of the National Debt in your life ! What ? don't you pay taxes for the leather upon your feet, for the candles you burn, and the beer you drink, &c. and do not these go towards the payment of that Debt ?

D. They do ; but not one stiver of the money comes out of *my* pocket.

G. Out of whose pocket then does it come ?

D. Out of the pockets of my customers, upon whom (by virtue of my own sovereign authority) I lay a counter-tax, which I include in the prices of the goods I sell them.

G. But, Mr Dunt, would not your profits be greater if you had *no taxes* to pay, or at least fewer taxes ?

D. In the first place, to have *no Taxes* to pay, is what, Mr Grunt, I do not well understand, because, in my poor apprehension, wherever there is a state of Civil Society, be the Government Republican or Monarchial, a certain expence for the maintenance of those who administer the Law and Police of the

country, is necessary—this can only be made good by a tax upon all those who enjoy the protection of such a Government—Before therefore men can have *no taxes* to pay, they must return to the savage state, which I should be sorry to see happen in my days.

G. But mark me, Mr Dunt, would not you be better off if your taxes were less ?

D. Not a whit, because my customers would know as well as myself, that the less public burdens I had to pay, the cheaper I could afford to sell my commodities.

G. But what say you, Mr Dunt, to the case of the Journeyman Artificer, or Day Labourer, who has *no commodities to sell* ? in what manner does he reimburse himself, for the proportion of the National Debt which *he* pays ?

D. The labourer or artificer makes his employer pay all taxes for him ; the taxes *he* pays, are included in his wages ; if he had none such to pay, his master would be obliged to shorten his wages, because, as I have already said, the master's price would in such a case be shortened by his customer.

G. You run too fast, Mr Dunt. You must confess that there *are* taxes paid, and pretty heavy ones too ; then pray, since neither the Merchant, the Tradesmen, nor the Labourer pays them, who does pay them ?

D. The answer is easy : The payment of the Public Taxes falls ultimately upon the shoulders of the opulent, as indeed it ought

to do agreeably to nature and reason. The Merchant, the Artificer and the Day Labourer, and in short every one who either sells commodities, or has occasion to use taxed ones, shoves the payment of these and all other taxes from off himself, upon his customer, or employer; at last they land upon those who live upon the income of their estates, or salaries, but who have little or nothing to sell, through the medium of which they can reimburse themselves for the Public Taxes they pay. If you will give yourself the trouble to examine this matter, you will find that *thus* it must ever necessarily *be* among Civil Society, where an *equality* of property does not take place.

G. O ho! You have got a new light.

D. Yes, through God's goodness I have, and am convinced, that that sort of equality which I have heard you and others preach and maintain, would be fatal to the happiness of Civil Society, because as there would be then no one richer than another, industry would have neither scope nor inducement, and universal wretchedness and poverty would pervade the whole.

C. Well, neighbour Dunt, to wave other subjects for a little, and since you are now something cooler, pray how could you be so uncivil as to call me a traitor?

D. Be quiet, Mr Grunt: let matters rest as they are.

C. But I demand an explanation.

D. Demand ! Well then, sir, don't you remember, when at a certain house, that you drank D———n to all K——s, and success to the arms of the French Republic ; that you wished the French would invade this country ; that you said you would join them, &c.

G. O, these were only the reveries of drink ; besides I don't remember such things.

D. If *you* don't remember, there are others who do, and who have as well as myself detested your principles ever since.

G. My Principles ! I defy any man to question them ; you are very unruly, Mr Dunt.

D. Not half so unruly as you was upon the night alluded to.

G. Come, landlady, bring us another gill.

D. No more gills, Mr Grunt ; I have got enough of your company.

G. My company ! D———n, I am company for the best of your titled Aristocrates, or your turn-coat blacksmiths.

D. Yes ; you think so when you are drunk, but whether you are drunk or sober, the world knows you to be no more than an arrant hypocrite of a weaver.

G. Hypocrite, Sir !

D. Yes hypocrite, *because* you sing Psalms and attend religious duties on Sundays, and all the rest of the week you know how you employ yourself.

G. And pray, Mr Dunt, how do I employ myself ?

D. Since you must have it, then I tell you that your constant business except when at your loom (and when there too you endeavour by your discourse to poison the minds of your servants), is to hatch plans to tear the entrails of your Country, and to correspond with the black assassins of France, for the purpose of acting in your native land, the dismal Tragedies which have lately disgraced that devoted Country. And yet, you are a man who professes the meek and Holy Religion of Jesus, and do moreover, for a cloak to your villainy, partake punctually of its most solemn institutions.

G. Scoundrel! you must instantly fight me.

Mr Tacit Neuter. Gentlemen, it must not be so in my company; we are neighbours, and I wish to prevent all disputes here, or enquiries hereafter; for to speak the truth, there has been so much said, that I wish you would be friends before the matter goes farther.

G. I have no objections.

D. You ought not to have any, for I am acquainted with as much of your conduct as would bring you — to —.

G. The gallows I suppose you mean.

D. It don't signify what I mean, I have said enough, I only tender you one advice, take care of yourself.

G. Take you care of the Guillotine.

D. Yes, I dare say if you and your party should ever get the upper hand, you will not be behind the bloody fiends of France,

in all manner of Injustice, Cruelty, Assassination and Murder.

G. It is false, the French *never* committed any Murders or Assassinations ; they only revenged themselves upon their enemies, as we will upon *our* enemies here, when the power is in our hands. D——n you both, you are not fit for my company, I am one of the Ki—ings of the Free---inds of the (*bicup*) People.

Exit Grunt as drunk as a Swine.

D. Honest Mr Neuter, that man has just now spoke the sentiments of his party. I have, thank God, discovered their true Principles, in time to prevent me from being an innocent Instrument of their Crimes.

N. You know, Mr Dunt, I espouse no party *publickly*, but I am a friend to the peace and prosperity of my country. You know, I told you six months ago, that the person who has now left us was a bad man, and that he and others of the same stamp were endeavouring, under pretence of a reform in Parliament, to pave the way for a Revolution in this country. Such a Revolution, even supposing it for a moment to be possible, could not be accomplished but at the expence of an ocean of blood. But he is regardless of that, you see how barefacedly he justifies the inhuman Massacres committed in France in cold blood, so inhuman indeed, that some of the Members of the French Convention, ashamed of the horrid facts of the first days of September, proposed to set

on foot an enquiry concerning them ; to the everlasting disgrace of the French Nation, the affair was however hushed up, and now composes part of the dreadful list of French crimes.

D. I have been hitherto blinded by misrepresentations ; I thought I was engaged in an honest upright cause, until an accident discovered to me the contrary. I am indebted to a worthy Gentleman, a customer of mine, for having perfected the conviction I feel, by painting to me in true colours, the folly and perfidy of those men with whom Grunt has associated.

N. I believe you know, Mr Dunt, that I am your friend, as well as the friend of peace ; refrain the company of Grunt and his brethren in iniquity, for I know that they have it in view to ruin our country. I trust in God they will fail in their attempts ; but they will no doubt involve many honest unsuspecting people in misery along with themselves, for which I shall be heartily sorry.

D. I know their designs are bad, and through God's assistance, I shall for ever refrain the company of these pretended reformers. It was as I said by accident that I discovered their true Principles. A friend of mine, who had, like myself, joined their Society, (under the belief that there was no more meant by them, than a moderate Reform in Parliament,) began to suspect they had secret designs, the nature of which

they did not chuse to make him acquainted with. After one of their Meetings had broke up, the Chiefs or Leaders as usual remained behind, and repaired privately to a Tavern. My friend had the curiosity to follow them, and by the connivance of the Waiter, was let into a room where he over-heard distinctly all their Treasonable, Bloody and Atrocious Designs. My friend gave me the hint, and both him and myself have since that time absented ourselves from their Meetings. I am thankful to God that I have escaped so easily from the counsels of those sons of Belial.

N. It has been a maxim with me, Mr Dunt, all my life, to compare men's public declarations with their private lives, in order to form a right judgment of their sincerity. These men, who have inlisted themselves under the banners of Reform, for the pretended purpose of enlarging the Liberties of their Country, and renovating its Constitution, are the most unfit persons in the world for such an undertaking, did the case demand it, and were their intentions ever so pure. There are no doubt honest men amongst them, who are misled; but the Chiefs, and a very great many of them, are of an opposite description; bad men they are in private life, hypocrites in religion, and children in politics, that most difficult of all Sciences. These reformers of Kingdoms and States are (ninety-nine out of an hundred of them) totally unacquainted

with the Constitution and History of even their own Country,—fit persons those to form new plans for governing mankind, who are themselves ignorant of the instructing page of History, and the progress of Civilization among mankind; History I say, by which the sage and judicious composer of Political Institutions, is enabled to form notions of the future conduct of mankind, by his observation of the past, and thereby to fix his system upon experience, instead of trusting to untried theories. But the want of Political Knowledge in these pretended Friends of the People, is their least fault; there are many among them who are very bad men, cruel unnatural husbands and fathers, scoffers at religion, atheists, free-thinkers, bankrupts in their affairs, idle, disorderly, drunken, dissolute and unprincipled, “*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God.*” This description applies to those among them who think themselves most capable and knowing; the rest are utterly unfit to form any judgment *at all* for themselves, upon the subject of Politics: all their terms and arguments are at second hand: it is no wonder it should be so; they are illiterate working people, day-labourers, apprentices, and servants. Some of these men, instead of attempting to reform the Constitution, would be employed to better purpose in learning to read and write their mother tongue, and to understand the Principles of the Christian Religion. They might

likewise with more advantage, look into their own conduct and practice, particularly towards their families, many of whom are starving at home, while the idiot husband is perhaps harkening to the harangues of some still more idiot Politician, and squandering the money which should support his infant offspring.

D. I can vouch for the likeness of this picture, I have seen it often. I sincerely blame myself for expending those hours in associating with idle and criminal men, which I might have employed in seeking the knowledge of my Maker. The topics and affairs of the Friends of the People, will be out of the question upon a death-bed; the remembrance of mispent time will be bitter to the man who is about to put on immortality.

N. I am glad to find you in such a temper of mind, my worthy neighbour. We will now retire if you please to our own houses. Let us be thankful that we can say we have a home; God knows how soon we may be disturbed in the possession of all that is dear to us. Our antient enemies, who may well be called the Scourges of Europe, are threatening us. Their threats would be vain, but alas! by circumstances equally unnatural as astonishing, they will find friends in the bosom of our country. Soon will these friends of France perceive their mistake: one day's intercourse with their new associates will shew them that these preten-

ded Asserters of the freedom of the Human Race, are themselves *very Monsters of Tyranny and Oppression*; trampling under foot every law of *God and Man*, which shall interfere with their insatiable thirst for dominion and plunder. But don't let us despond, these Gasconading Ruffians will find TRUE BRITONS ready to receive them, should they dare to pollute the soil of genuine liberty with their unhallowed and bloody footsteps. Yes, my good Neighbour, let us die for our Country, for our Liberties, for our Religion, for our Children, and for our Families. Let our eyes be shut in death, rather than to live to see the direful transactions, which those Monsters whose hands are now reeking with blood, would introduce into our happy Island, were they to succeed in their daring enterprises.

D. Surely, my good neighbour, let us die for our Country, for our Religion and for our Liberties. Farewell, Good-night, and sound repose.

F I N I S.

